Pakistan's Invitation

2659. SHRIC. M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan invited him to visit Islamabad, in the context of fundamentalists aggressive protests in Pakistan and the recent US strikes on Taliban by over-flying Pak-territory; and

(b) if so, the issues discussed during the visit, and the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) Following the summit level talks at Agra in July this year, the Government of Pakistan extended formal invitations to the Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister to visit Pakistan. These visits have not yet taken place.

(b) Does not arise.

Downsizing the structure of Ministry of External Affairs

2660. SHRI N ARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are contemplating to downsize the structure of his Ministry both in India and abroad as similar exercises are being done by the other Ministries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) as budgetary allocations have increased from Rs. 1509.03 crores in 1997-98 to Rs. 2720.72 crores in 2000-01, whether th: s increasing trend would be arrested in next year's Budget; and

(d) if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Ministry of External Affairs like all other Ministries is conducting an exercise to downsize its structure both in India and abroad under the guidelines issued by the Cabinet. Recently, Ministry of External Affairs has abolished and surrendered 151 posts.

(c) and (d) Ministry of External Affairs' budgetary allocation for the year 1997-98 was Rs. 1513.40 crores and has increased to Rs. 2625.68 crores in